

THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE OKLAHOMA  
ASSOCIATION OF NEW FARMERS OF AMERICA ,

By

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THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE OKLAHOMA  
ASSOCIATION OF NEW FARMERS OF AMERICA

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Mr. Don M. Orr, Associate Professor of Agricultural Education, Oklahoma State University.

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Much credit is due my wife, Mae Kathryn, for her help in this thesis.

## INTRODUCTION

The History and Development of the Oklahoma Association of New Farmers of America is an effort of the writer to compile in story form between the covers of one book the records of the Oklahoma Association to show the progress the association has made; to consider the development and growth of the organization, the programs of work, the recreational activities, and the financing and contribution to the national organization of New Farmers of America and to indicate the contributions its members have made and are now making to society.

To learn the facts behind the Oklahoma Association of the NFA the writer read the NFA Record, a twice-a-year publication of the Oklahoma Association since its beginning, a choice source of information, as was the National Convention proceedings.

D. C. Jones, Teacher Trainer, Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma, was interviewed on several occasions, as well as local advisers of the NFA. W. N. Elam, Program Specialist, U.S. Office of Education, Washington, D.C., was also interviewed. He supplied many of the records of the National winners.

The NFA Guide, the official guide for the leaders and membership of the New Farmers of America, was used to good advantage.

Fortunately the writer has attended each state convention of the Oklahoma Association from 1941 through 1960 and has attended many of the national conventions of the New Farmers of America.

The purposes of the study are as follows:

1. To give an accurate recorded history of the development of the New Farmers of America in Oklahoma.
2. To compile the information into one authentic record.
3. To have a recorded factual history of the New Farmers of America.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE NEW FARMERS OF AMERICA ORGANIZATION: WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT DOES

The New Farmers of America (N.F.A.) is the national organization of, by, and for boys studying vocational agriculture in the public secondary schools primarily in sixteen southern states in the United States.

The name New Farmers of America was adopted by the various state organizations after the national organization was formed in 1935. The words "New Farmers" was selected because it was a new organization, representing and presenting new ideas and new ways of doing things. The name was well accepted, and each state association became known as the state association of New Farmers of America. For example, the organization in Oklahoma is the Oklahoma Association of New Farmers of America.

The N.F.A. has seven student officers, who are elected each year by the delegates present at the national convention. They are president, student secretary, student treasurer, reporter, and one vice-president from each of the organization's three administrative sections.

The adult board of directors, designated as the advisory council, is made up of the administrative adviser, adviser, administrative executive secretary, executive secretary, executive treasurer, and one adviser from each of the organization's three administrative sections. The administrative sections are Sargent, Washington, and Almot.

The N.F.A. constitution and by-laws provides that the administrative adviser shall be the Chief of the Agricultural Branch of the Office of Education and that the office of administrative executive secretary shall be held by a member of his staff. The State Supervisor of Agricultural Education shall be the administrative adviser of the state association, and he shall designate a member of the state professional staff in agricultural education to serve as adviser. In all cases the high school teacher of vocational agriculture shall serve as local adviser. State and national conventions are held annually.

As of September 1959, the National Office issued this statement, "The N.F.A. is composed of 1,052 chapters and 47,866 active members."<sup>1</sup>

In the formative years a group of sectional advisers collaborated and came forth with these statements on what the organization would do:

- "1. It would teach and promote the spirit of cooperation, which is the slogan of the hour in rural development.
2. It would give a wider field for the development of rural leadership among the boys and develop scholarship, recreation, and vocational ability.
3. It would serve as a medium for a wider exchange of ideas, acquaintances, fellowship, experiences, and achievements.
4. It would serve as a stimulus of healthy competition in various contests to a high degree of skills, judgment, and achievements.
5. It would serve to develop higher and more uniform standards in agricultural development, production, and scholarship."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>M. A. Fields, New Farmer of America - 25 Years of Accomplishment. Washington 25, D.C., page 2.

<sup>2</sup>The State NFA Scrap Book. Page 5.



The N.F.A. has done and is still doing these things; however, the writer believes that what the N.F.A. is, is clearly stated or summarized in the statement of the purposes of the New Farmers of America in the national N.F.A. constitution and by-laws:

- "1. To create more interest in the intelligent choice of farming occupation.
2. To assist in the development of individual farming programs and establishment in farming.
3. To strengthen the confidence of the farm boy in himself and in his work.
4. To create and nurture a love for country life.
5. To assist in the improvement of the rural home and its surroundings.
6. To encourage cooperative effort among students of vocational agriculture.
7. To develop rural leadership.
8. To promote thrift.
9. To promote scholarship among students of vocational agriculture.
10. To encourage recreational and educational activities for students in vocational agriculture.
11. To advance vocational agricultural education in public schools in the states providing for such instruction." <sup>3</sup>

The United States, in order to maintain itself as a leader of the other nations of the world, must have a constant supply of well trained, dynamic young people, particularly young men, growing up to fulfill the positions of leadership in the community, the state, the nation, and the world.

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<sup>3</sup> The NFA Guide. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington 25, D.C., 1956, page 14.

In the area of training for leadership there are certain broad principles that those who would lead must acquire in order to provide the kind of leadership that is necessary for the implementation of democracy. This does not imply that only the ones who will lead must of necessity be the ones given the opportunity to acquire these principles so that the democratic system may survive; the electorate must also acquire these principles.

These broad principles of leadership are: character, individuality, tolerance, faith, and confidence.

Good character in many ways embodies the other broad principles of leadership here stated. On good character Ardway Tead has this to say:

"Character building is concerned with attitudes and behavior attitudes which are hopefully improving the quality of every act of individual conduct at all times. Training of character is achieved by discipline of the body, the will, and the intelligence.

All the ordinary dealings of person to person and group with group require general adherence to a kind of total integrity, to standards of conduct, which hold society together with something like a gravitational pull in which character is its force and power.

Character is manifested in a certain personal resolution and determination to adhere persistently to the best person knows and can discover in his choices of activity and commitment. Character denotes a capacity 'to stand and having done all to stand' with courage and perseverance, with willingness and with ability to face up to and pay the price of consequences of decisions personally arrived at as wise and sound. Social conformity for its own sake in any literal and inclusive sense is thus not necessarily an indication of character.

Character includes, also, a sincerity, integrity and trustworthiness, some large consistency of purpose and direction, self-responsibility and self developed autonomy of judgement and action, themselves to be determined in ways that will most assuredly bring a felt sense of validity, and this in respect to inner personal and outer social issues.

The sensible degree of conformity to traditional modes of behavior and the extent of departure from them thus become a function of the judgemental effect which the person is willing and, even more, is able to make. The reflective process and the judgemental act becomes moral acts in themselves when they are concerned with matters which have any important consequences for self or society. For dependent on how

searchingly these efforts are pursued will be the wisdom of the decision reached.

Character is evidenced, in short, by a morally sustained total approach, attack, attitude, and follow-through of conduct. Whether it be home, business, sports, social affairs, political, or civic action -- all must possess a basic bond of personal responsibility, without which they fall into chaos. And this requirement of defined standards is uniquely true of the fulfillment of those purposes and activities in our society that we identify as democratic. No explication of the character-building aspects of education can fail to place high in importance the critical dependence of democratic aspirations and processes upon the integrity and sense of responsibility of the generality of citizens, to say nothing of the necessity for conscious training in those moral qualities that democratic leadership entails. Democracy as a preferred mode of human association and of social process can survive and prosper only as it can assume the good character of its elected and appointed officials and the continuing responsible honesty and vigilance of an informed electorate.

Personal qualities of strength of character are not a spontaneous achievement. Results so important, purposes so vital -- these will be assured only by conscious intention, by planning, and by conducting effective training measures with all possible deliberateness."<sup>4</sup>

Through the group action of the various committees of the New Farmers of America the experiences are provided for its members to acquire the fundamental principles of leadership. The Oklahoma Association of NFA through its local chapters has six or more committees of major importance in the area of leadership, growth, and development. These committees are: 1. Program of work, 2. Project, 3. Community service, 4. Conduct of meetings, 5. Recreational activity, and 6. Scholarship. Through these committees, it is believed the boys learn to develop character; the expression of individuality -- that every human being is of worth; "that the structure of social and political life exists for the greatest good of all and should serve the individual rather than the individual serving the machinery of the organization; "that each person must be given the opportunity to develop to his fullest competence and to become

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<sup>4</sup> Tead, Ardway. Character Building In Higher Education. MacMillan Company, New York, 1953, pp. 1-25.

a responsible self-directing individual;"<sup>5</sup> tolerance - "the empathy, or identification with others, standing in their place and truly seeing their problems as they see and feel them;"<sup>6</sup> a willingness to hear the minority report of a committee; faith -- as the "Master Teacher" taught it "The substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen." Faith in God and through faith in God find faith in themselves and their fellow man; and finally confidence -- a firm belief in themselves, a willingness to test their ability. Self-confidence in the desire and the ability to develop from the sweat of his own brow the things which he wants and needs.

With the basic purposes in mind, the national awards, and the local chapter programs all interwoven to provide leadership, the organization provides the experiences for the development of its members through actual participation in democratic leadership training, establishment in farming and community betterment.

The experiences provided by the organization are real and true-to-life. Many of these same experiences will be faced again by these members as they take their places in the community, the state, the nation, and the world.

The programs of the New Farmers of America deal closely with living plants and animals. These programs have a tendency to bring its members just a little closer to God and to appreciate His handiwork. Thus they realize that man is a product of God and that He has a love for all mankind. Thus man seeks ways to better serve God; for through serving humanity he can better serve Him, for to love is to serve.

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<sup>5</sup>Baxter, Bernice. Group Experiences the Democratic Way. Harper Brothers, 1943, New York, page 2.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid, page 5.

Could it be that the Oklahoma Association of New Farmers of America is a part of that training force for leadership in the United States?

Just how well the NFA is carrying out its aims and purposes will be explored in the chapters that follow.

## CHAPTER II

### THE FORMATION OF THE OKLAHOMA ASSOCIATION

The year 1927 was a busy one for Professor D. C. Jones, then State Teacher Trainer of Vocational Agriculture for Negroes of Oklahoma. One of the reasons for his being busy was the laying of groundwork for the new state organization that several vocational agriculture departments had expressed an interest in forming. With the smoke of a state organization for farm boys studying vocational agriculture being fanned and blown into a flame by the state teacher trainer a meeting was called by Professor D. C. Jones to see whether the Vocational Agriculture boys of Oklahoma wanted to organize on a statewide basis.

From May 2 through May 5 thirteen of the sixteen departments of vocational agriculture met at Langston University with a hundred and twelve students in attendance. The meeting was called to order by Professor D. C. Jones, the State Teacher Trainer of Vocational Agriculture Teachers; then there was group singing and a prayer by the Reverend Thomas, a minister who came with the Summit Chapter. Professor D. C. Jones, using the constitution and by-laws of the New Farmers of Virginia (NFV), explained what the meeting was about.

The departments present for the first meeting were as follows: Berwyn, Boynton, Clearview, Crescent, Langston, Luther, McAlester,

Rentisville, Sand Springs, Summit, Taft, Vernon, and Worrior.<sup>1</sup> Two of the original group of advisers, Ed Brown and M. L. Smith, and the State Teacher Trainer, D. C. Jones, are still in the service of the NFA. Ed Brown, affectionately called by the State Supervisor of Vocational Education the "Dean" of Vocational Agriculture teachers of Oklahoma, is the adviser at Sand Springs. M. L. Smith, is adviser at Beggs, and D. C. Jones is still state teacher trainer and executive adviser to the NFA, a position he has held since its organization in 1928.

"D. C.", as he is called by his many friends, in recalling the first meeting, says that the major problem confronted was to get a program that was pointing to a direct purpose; to develop a program in Oklahoma similar to the organization in operation in Virginia.

"D. C." acted as temporary chairman. The motion that a state organization be formed was made, seconded, and carried. The name selected was the New Farmers of Oklahoma (NFO). An election of officers was held, and the following officers were elected:

OFFICE	NAME	CHAPTER
President	Oliver Word	Taft
Vice-President	Charles Butler	McAlester
Secretary	Nathaniel Booker	Berwyn
Treasurer	Marion Samuels	Luther
Reporter	Charles McIntosh	Boynton
Adviser	D. C. Jones	Langston
Executive Committee Members:	O. Caldwell	
	E. Howard	
	E. Macklin <sup>2</sup>	

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<sup>1</sup>The NFA Record. Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma, 1928, page 3.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, page 3.

Oliver Word, the first state president, went on to finish high school and enter college at Langston University, majoring in Agricultural Education and Band Music. He finished college with honors and taught vocational agriculture for several years. He left the field to take charge of the trades and industrial training program at Dunbar High School at Shawnee. Later he became principal of the high school. The high school has since been integrated, and he is now principal of the Dunbar Junior High and Elementary School.

The members were given considerable encouragement at the first meeting by the President of Langston University, Dr. Hubert, who pointed out to them the way to success and independent living. He placed every available resource of the University at their service.

"D. C.", in looking back to the first meeting, states that the question was raised why there should be a state organization. The answer given was to provide a more uniform program for the chapters over the state; to provide for wider competition and broader training for students studying vocational agriculture; and to develop leadership ability.

During the two-day conference several goals for chapters to work toward during the year were set up. In a humble way this was the first state program of work. It was composed of the following six goals:

- "1. Let only bona fide vocational agriculture students into each chapter.
2. Get every student to complete his supervised practice.
3. Get 80% of the members to save and invest some part of their earnings in farming.
4. Let every chapter strive to produce at least one "Modern Farmer".



5. Hold one Father-Son Banquet.

6. Select good officers and see to it that the organization functions.<sup>3</sup>

In the very first meeting, arrangements through the efforts of the teacher trainer, D. C. Jones, a judging contest was held which included dairy, crop, swine, and poultry. In addition to these there were a milking contest, outstanding NFO member contest, organization contest (points for departments that had organized chapters), and mileage-traveled contest. When asked the purpose of the latter two contest, "D. C." stated that the big problem in the beginning was getting local chapters to organize and to get large delegations to attend the state meeting. The two latter contests were to serve and did serve as a stimulus for getting the above-mentioned problems solved. The Summit Chapter won the silver loving cup for having the most members present who traveled the farthest.

The association started with thirteen chapters and four hundred and three members. In the organization just prior to the integration movement in 1953 Oklahoma had twenty-seven chapters and a thousand and eighty active members.<sup>4</sup>

From the beginning, leadership has been one of the high areas of training of NFA members. Many of its state officers have gone on to become leaders in the communities in which they live.

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<sup>3</sup>The NFA Record. Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma, 1928, page 2.

<sup>4</sup>The NFA Record. Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma, March 1953, page 3.



Figure 1. The three men above had much to do with the growth and development of the Oklahoma Association of New Farmers of America. Left to right: D.C. Jones, Teacher Trainer, Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma; J.B. Perky, State Directory, Vocational Education and State Supervisor, Vocational Agriculture; and Ed Brown, "Dean" of Vocational Agriculture Teachers in Oklahoma. Brown is receiving an award from J. B. Perky.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE OKLAHOMA ASSOCIATION'S FIRST YEAR

The NFO chapter members who attended the first state meeting were quite enthusiastic over their new organization. They returned to their communities with a great deal of zeal and were determined to let the people of their respective communities know that the NFO was a live and going organization. The examples that follow will attest to the above statement.

The Boynton Chapter held one picnic, two community project tours, one project tour out of the community, two "father and son" banquets, and a community fair and poultry show.

The Luther Chapter, in order to promote a better understanding between father and son, had its members at the Father-Son Banquet to express their thoughts, aspirations, and ideals to the fathers. The fathers responded by assuring their sons that the ideals, hopes, and aspirations expressed by them would lead to a much better understanding between them.

The Luther Chapter awarded prizes at its Father-Son Banquet to the best students of Vocational Agriculture. The following prizes were awarded: T. J. Macklin, first, \$5.00, Cornelius Diggs, second, \$3.00, and Luke Anderson, third, \$2.00. These prizes may seem small compared

to prizes being awarded today for the Star Chapter Farmer; however, after the stock market crash of 1929 a dime was as hard to get as a counterfeit two-dollar bill is today.

The Sand Springs Chapter made itself felt in the community by raising pure-bred poultry and selling eggs. Because Sand Springs is close to Tulsa, there was a ready market for the poultry products. These young men cleared over \$6,000 during the school year 1928-29 from their supervised farming program.

The Taft NFO terracing team won much attention for its ability to terrace land. This team terraced two farms in the Taft community.

The Vernon Chapter was quite busy during the first year in performing community services. This chapter painted the school house and the farm shop building and did repair work on some farm homes in the community. They also prepared flower beds, set out trees, and constructed a walk to the school ground.

Many other chapters had just as outstanding first-year activities.

"The country boy's creed" was adopted to develop more pride in country living and self-reliance. The creed is as follows:

"I believe that the country, which God made, is more beautiful than the city, which man made and that life out-of-doors and in touch with the earth is the natural life of man. I believe that work is work wherever we find it but that work with nature is more inspiring than work with the most intricate machinery.

I believe that the dignity of labor depends not on what one does but on how he does it, that opportunity comes to a boy on the farm as often as to a boy in the city, that life is larger and freer and happier on the farm than in the town, that one's success depends not upon his location but upon himself, not upon his dreams but upon what he actually does, not upon luck but upon pluck.

I believe in working when one works and playing when he plays and giving and demanding a square deal in every act of life."<sup>1</sup>

Everything was not rosy for the NFO during its first year, for it suffered a tragedy. One of its founding officers, as young as he was, died December 8, 1928. To his memory was written. All who witnessed the first state meeting of the NFO remember the keen intellect, zeal, a and enthusiasm of a leader of the organization. All remember the active part he played in shaping the organization. All regret that this character will not be with them again. Elmo Macklin played his part well and, though dead, yet speaks. To him this the March 1929 issue of the NFO Record was dedicated.

"Elmo started as a vocational student two years ago. He expressed his desire to become a poultryman from the beginning, but it was only a little more than a year ago when he decided definitely upon his plans. After consulting his teacher, he decided that he would start a flock by purchasing some baby chicks. The details of his plans showed that the cost far exceeded his means of financing the project; so he began to figure out a means by which he could carry out his plans and reduce the cost. He learned to do simple rock construction work in the vocational department at school and found that he could build his poultry house of native rocks, plenty of which he had at home. He discovered, also that good find sand could be obtained on the same plot he wanted to build his house on. All he needed to buy, therefore, was the cement and some lime. He secured a brooder and started with 112 baby chicks. He soon increased that number to 240. He was so successful that he managed to keep his mortality down to less than ten percent. He sold his surplus cockerels and culls at frying size, and became so inspired that he started plans to build a larger and better plant.

His first house was a 12' x 12' structure. He drew the plans for his new plant, which included yares and runs and a monitor type 14' x 28' house. He started the new house last summer, and completed it during the month of October. His plant now has a forty foot front, and both houses are built of rocks which he assembled near his home. He moved his 100

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<sup>1</sup>The NFH Record. Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma, March 1929, page 1.

hens into the new house before he became too sick to work and began to feed them for his winter eggs. Except for the total cost of construction, which, could not be charged against the project for one year, his records show that he made a neat profit.

Besides being a "B" student in his school subjects, he was a model student in conduct and behavior. He was a member of the high school orchestra, a member of the high school literary society, reporter of the local NFO chapter, and a member of the State Executive Committee. The part he played as editor of the NFO News Letter, a monthly publication of the local chapter, brought him much comment."<sup>2</sup>

A fine example of how the NFO chapters lost no time in making themselves known throughout their local community is expressed in the following open letter written by Mrs. Addie M. Jackson of the Boynton community and published in the county paper.

"To Whom It May Concern:

I am, as many others are, so enthused and inspired over the work of the NFO of our community under the direction of Prof. W. D. Gilmore that I write this, that the public may know more generally the great progress that has been made since its organization.

In the autumn of 1927, Professor organized the NFO in our community. This work was entirely new to both patrons and pupils, but after it was duly explained they ventured out with confidence in their leader.

A Father-Son Banquet sponsored by Prof. Gilmore, Advisory Committee, and the NFO was given at which time the work was thoroughly and fully explained by Prof. Gilmore. He placed great emphasis and stress on "The Relation of Father-Son as Co-workers on the Farm."

This brought its desired results and at the end of the year, each member had completed his project, clearing a net sum of money, bought many necessities which otherwise could not have been gotten and was teaming with inspiration to have a better project the next year.

Ownership is incentive to labor, therefore, when our boys are permitted to have something of their own, they begin to realize the opportunity that the farm presents to them and are contented to remain there.

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid, page 2.

The NFO under its present leadership in our community is accomplishing this. So I have only to say "Long live NFO, especially in our immediate community."

Respectfully,  
[Signed] Mrs. Addie M. Jackson<sup>3</sup>

The young state NFO members realized that there would have to be some means of raising money to finance the organization; so they voted an assessment of five dollars a chapter to finance the organization's activities.

The foregoing examples of the NFO activities seem to indicate that the organization was wanted, needed, and served a definite purpose in the communities where it existed. As the years have borne out, the NFO was established on solid ground, and this is a tribute to its early leadership.

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<sup>2</sup>The NFA Record. Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma, June 1929, page 12.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE ORIGIN OF THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

With the wide acceptance of the state associations and their relative success, some thought and talk of forming a larger organization was heard. In 1929 a regional judging contest was held in Arkansas with the Oklahoma Association taking part. Later in that same year a committee composed of the following state advisers; C. J. Woodward, Arkansas, Carnelius King, Louisiana, P. S. Boles, Mississippi, L. A. Potts, Texas, and D. C. Jones, Oklahoma, met to discuss the idea and make plans for a regional organization of Negro boys studying vocational agriculture. With the help of Dr. H. O. Sargent, Federal Agent for Agriculture Education, who had contact with all states, this committee presented the following report:

"that a regional organization be formed, that a constitution and by-laws fitting those of the various states be written, and that an emblem be developed. The emblem shall be in the shape of a cotton bloom, with the owl, the plow, the rising sun, and the letters "NFA" New Farmers of America shall be used as the regional emblem. The emblem shall also have the words "Vocational Agriculture" engraved on it.

The emblem shall be either pins or buttons, which shall be gold-filled, silver-plated, and bronze.

Medals shall be circular with the owl and the plow as background and shall have "Vocational Agriculture" inscribed and a movable disk indicating the judging events."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The State NFA Scrap Book, page 7.



Thus the foundation for the Almot section was laid. The Almot section is now composed of Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Texas. The original states were Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, and Oklahoma. This regional organization was then known as A-L-Tex-O.

The Washington section was formed earlier in 1928, and the Gulf section was formed a little later than the A-L-Tex-O section. Regional meetings were held in the years that followed with respective states serving as host.

During the following three or four years the idea of a national organization of Negro boys studying vocational agriculture was growing. Early in 1935 Dr. Sargent made arrangements to hold the first national meeting of New Farmers of America at Tuskegee Institute, Tuskegee, Alabama. The delegates and the representatives assembled August 4, 1935, to form the national organization with a tentative constitution and by-laws.

David Simmons, president of the host state association, presided over the initial meeting. The following states were represented at the meeting: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia, Louisiana, and Maryland. Each state was permitted two delegates as the first national house of delegates assembled. David Simmons, as the acting chairman, in order to facilitate the business of the convention, appointed the following committees: Constitution and By-laws, Program of Work, Manual, Nominating, Publicity and NFA Day, National Medals and Reports, Contest, Alumni NFA Organization, Uniforms, Budget, and Resolutions. The first national NFA officers elected were as follows: President--David Simmons, Alabama, First

Vice-President--Elbert Pettiford, North Carolina, Second Vice-President--Wardell Thompson, Texas, Third Vice-President-- Joseph Johnson, Virginia, Secretary--Howard Brazil, Mississippi, Adviser--C. H. Banks, Texas, Executive Secretary-Treasurer--S. B. Simmons, North Carolina. <sup>2</sup>

Among the highlights of the first convention were the formal adaption of the tentative constitution and by-laws; awarding of the Honorary Superior Farmer degree to Dr. H. O. Sargent and S. B. Simmons, and the first effort to standardize state and national awards.

Thus began the national organization for Negro boys studying vocational agriculture in the seventeen southern states.

The second National NFA Broadcast was given in 1938 in cooperation with the "Wings over Jordan" program with D. C. Jones as the guest speaker. The speech by "D. C." in many ways was a tribute to Booker T. Washington, Vocational Education, and the NFA. The speech was as follows:

"Cast down your buckets where you are. These words turn our attention to Booker T. Washington and his contribution to vocational education. They express the hope and provide the guidance for 50,000 New Farmers of America. They take us back to his struggle for an education at Hampton Institute and then to his efforts in a grand experiment, out of which he developed procedures and systems of education, philosophies which influenced a system of education. Booker T. Washington was convinced that education is a process whereby people grow into proper habits of living. He gathered data by observing the habits, industry, economy, religion, customs, health and social relations of his people. These he analyzed and discovered that the destiny of a race was inseparably bound with ability to produce goods or services, and if such goods or services had merit, society would accept them and make proper reward. He made this clear in these words, 'one farm bought, one house built, one home sweetly and intelligently kept, one man who is the largest tax payer or has the largest bank account, one school or church maintained, one factory running successfully; one truck garden profitably cultivated, one patient cured by a Negro Doctor, one

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<sup>2</sup>The New Farmer of America - 25 Years of Accomplishment. U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington 25, D.C., 1959, pp. 5-6.

sermon well preached, one office well filled, one life cleanly lived -- these will tell more in our favor than all the abstract eloquence that can be summoned to plead our cause.

His way of changing a situation, or producing men and women who would themselves be changed, and then direct changes in the lives of thousands, is the story of Tuskegee Institute. This together with a large number of social and economic movements which he organized or influenced, provided goals as well as the procedures for vocational education.

Dr. Washington led the way to provide food and shelter for those he taught so that they might live in an environment where the primary habits of health, morals, and industry could be practiced, how provisions were made in the instructional program for students to earn a part of their living while learning a vocation are well known, and are now a very valuable part of our cultural and economic heritage. Today, we say that proper attitudes and points of view can be best developed where the atmosphere and environment are conducive to their growth, and that effective training for work must be given on a real job---

He expressed his philosophy of what vocational education means---to those who must work, he said 'I learned to love labor not alone for its financial value, but for labor's own sake and for the independence and self-reliance which the ability to do something which the world wants done brings.'

Then he spoke the words that have become the battle cry of the New Farmers of America, My experience is that there is something in human nature which always makes an individual recognize and reward merit, no matter under what color of skin merit is found----

Each year the NFA organization through the national and state associations, gives degrees of merit to outstanding members who have become established in farming. The achievement of the members each year who receive the Superior Farmer Degree from the national organization justifies Booker T. Washington's faith in the Negro Farm Boys of America.

The New Farmers of America is a part of Booker T. Washington's contribution to vocational education." <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>The Oklahoma NFA Scrap Book. Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma, page 1.

This speech, although given more than twenty years ago, fundamentally is sound today, tomorrow, and probably the day after. Through the incentive program of the NFA thousands of dollars are awarded each year to worthy members.

One only has to attend and watch the performance of the local, state, and national officers of the NFA to marvel at the great leadership potentials that this organization offers its members.

## CHAPTER V

### THE NFA DURING THE WAR YEARS

With the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, the New Farmers of America Oklahoma Association found themselves along with other red-blooded Americans engaged in mortal conflict with a ruthless enemy. Many NFA members, realizing their duty to God and country, immediately put down their hoes, stopped their tractors, and laid aside their plows and joined Uncle Sam's fighting forces. Thus they left the job of producing food to the much older and much younger men. Many of these younger men were NFA members who immediately took up the challenge with strong hearts and willing minds.

In the 1942 State Convention the NFA members adopted a special war program, which was headed with the following pledge:

- a. To keep physically and mentally fit.
- b. To serve in the Armed Forces.
- c. To produce quota of food for victory.
- d. To collect and sell scrap materials.
- e. To purchase Defense Stamps and Bonds.
- f. To repair farm machinery.
- g. To conserve human and natural resources.
- h. To develop morale.

This pledge was further expanded by listing ways and means to implement each practice of the pledge.

A former state president of the Oklahoma Association, Hollis Stearns, sent the following message to the state convention of the NFA in 1943:

"To my fellow mates in Agriculture, upon whose shoulders rest the success of our fighting men on all fronts, I would like for you to pause just a moment and realize just what responsibilities are in your hands! Your jobs ahead are great, and I am sure that each one of you will do your share.

Do not think at any time, that you can probably be more useful in a uniform of one of the Armed Forces than you are on the "home front". Let me assure you that the battle of production is one of the most important battles being fought today. You and your leaders are winning this battle.

With the rationing of canned foods, it is up to you as New Farmers to encourage production of more vegetables and larger quantities of them. We must have more and better livestock; yours is the job of promoting this production. You must encourage longer hours of work, and rapid repair of those broken tools that cannot be replaced by new ones.

While traveling in the last few months and observing and contacting a few state and local NFA Chapters, I find that they are making quite a number of sacrifices in their work. They are purchasing War Stamps and Bonds from the profits gained from cooperative projects. Other State Chapters have bought bonds from their budgets. This proves that they too are doing more than their share in this great struggle.

While we, in the Armed Forces, fight to keep "Old Glory" flying high on other fronts, I am confident that you, as New Farmers, will make every acre of land produce all that it can, and every bean stalk, and every vine produce all that they are capable of producing. If these are accomplished, victory will be ours.

In the production of these crops you must not forget the precautions of soil conservation. Keep down all erosion, and follow all scientific practices given you by your leaders. By using a little judgement, the sky will be your limit."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The NFA Record. Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma, August 1942, page 2.

The NFA membership did pause to listen to their former president, for from the reports that follow, the chapters were striving to do their bit.

The writer remembers very clearly the Wewoka Chapter's efforts in gathering scrap metal. It was brought to the attention of the chapter that in the area serviced by the chapter there were many old cars lying in ditches on eroded farms and that many of the owners would let the NFA boys remove the steel frames for the war effort. With further investigation and assurance from the instructor, C. G. Holt, the chapter accepted the idea. After two days of hard work and many burst or bruised fingers the chapter gathered four tons of scrap metal and thus aided the war effort as well as enhanced its treasury. This same type of project was initiated in many other chapters over the state. Many individual members of various chapters kept themselves up financially by gathering scrap materials.

There were other means of aiding the war effort. The Luther Chapter in the canning program jointly with the home economics girls canned seven hundred quarts for the school and another three hundred quarts for individual use. The Geary Chapter started a plant production program and with their hotbeds produced better than ten thousand tomato plants, forty-two thousand sweet potato plants, and nine thousand cabbage plants. The Colbert Chapter developed a poultry program for its community; it purchased three incubators and several brooders; its work consisted of selecting and grading eggs, culling, and vaccinating.

The over-all efforts of the Oklahoma NFA chapters as written up in the NFA Record was as follows: More food is the goal of Oklahoma NFA

Chapters. Many of them have installed special equipment at the school to aid in the drive. The equipment includes home-made battery brooders, electric brooders, special broiler plants, incubators, canning equipment, flue-heated hotbeds, small greenhouses to produce early plants and a meat processing plant. Twelve chapters have installed special equipment for the production of more poultry products. They have a combine capacity of 45,040 pounds of meat a year. Shawnee Chapter has a plant capacity of 6,000 pounds of broilers and fryers a year; Muskogee, 2,800, and Wewoka 2,000 pounds. The 1943 goal of the twelve chapters is 45,500 pounds greater than last year.

The Bristow Chapter operates a farmers' cooperatively owned incubator. The members hatched 15,240 chicks last year and will increase this number to 20,000 this year. The Muskogee Chapter operates a small meat-processing plant. More than 9,500 pounds of meat were processed last year. The Boynton Chapter, whose production borrowing exceeds \$1400 this year, is producing 490 hogs, 43 beef cattle, 217 turkeys, and 49 sheep.

Canning is practiced or promoted by all of the chapters in a centralized or decentralized form. Seven chapters have centralized canning at the school. The canning equipment included large retorts, specially built furnaces, sealers, corn cutters, and canning kitchens. The report last year shows 45,220 quarts of vegetables, fruits, and meats canned by chapters with centralized equipment.<sup>2</sup>

It can be seen from these reports that the chapters of the Oklahoma Association were working hard to fulfill the pledge they solemnly took to do their share in the great struggle to preserve Democracy.

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<sup>2</sup>The NFA Record. Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma, April 1943, page 15.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE NFA SPEECH CONTEST

The New Farmers of Oklahoma (NFO) during the years 1930 through 1933 used the debating team contest to train its chapter members in public speech making. When asked the reason for this program, D. C. Jones stated that debating teams were very popular in the state at that time and that many of the advisers had sold their boys on the program; it further gave more boys training than a single speech contest. In the 1933 state meeting it was moved and carried that the State Association sponsor an oratorical contest rather than a debating contest.

Several basic rules must be followed in the public speaking contest. 1. The boy must write the speech himself; however, he may use whatever resource material he chooses, and his adviser or English teacher may help him on sentence structure, punctuation, and delivery. 2. The speech must be on agriculture. 3. The speech must have a ten minute limitation; however, additional time may be allowed each contestant to defend his production on questions which will be used by the judges. 4. Prior to the contest three competent and impartial persons will be furnished typewritten copies of the contestants' productions, which they will read and grade on content and composition

and record their judgments on a score sheet, which will also be provided.

5. A time-keeper shall be designated, and he shall record the time used by each contestant in delivering his speech and shall note overtime, if any, for which deductions may be made.<sup>1</sup>

Even though Oklahoma did not have a speech contest until 1934, in the first national speech contest in 1936 the Oklahoma Association produced a third-place winner in Theo Tillman of the Sand Springs Chapter. Tillman's winning seems to have set the pattern for the Oklahoma Association, for since 1936 it has had nine national winners, five first-place winners and four third-place winners. Excerpts from the five first-place-winning speeches will be found on the pages that follow.

Willard Dallas of the Ada Chapter was the first of the five first-place-winning speakers. T. E. English, adviser for the Ada Chapter, was quite a speaker and leader in the NFA throughout his high school and college training, being president of his local chapter and president of the collegiate chapter. He as adviser to the Ada Chapter produced three national speech winners in the span of ten years. He himself prepared and trained his speakers. Dallas' speech was entitled "My Interpretation of the NFA Creed".

"I believe in the dignity of farm work. These words make the beginning of the creed of the New Farmers of America. Through a misconception of values, Negro America has often looked upon farm life as the most menial type of existence. The late Booker T. Washington aroused a storm of protest from Negro educators throughout the United States when it was learned that he advocated the idea of vocational training for the illiterate. Frustrated, unskilled and poverty stricken masses of his people were struggling for survival. It was at a time when their survival was being strongly questioned

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<sup>1</sup>The NFA Record. Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma, November 1954. Part two, section four.

and their rights and privileges as citizens severely curtailed. From the safety of the freer North, W. E. B. Du Bois and others of his school of thought denounced the Washington program as as a surrender to the "Negro-Phobic" South, a device calculated to forever "Keep the Negro In His Place," and to prevent him from acquiring the instruction necessary to free the mind and body from the shackles of slavery.

In defense of his program for training Negroes in skilled trades and business enterprises, Washington held that, Nothing else would so soon bring about right relations between the races of the South than the economic progress of the Negro. Economic progress was not wishful thinking, for in every Southern community where there has been economic progress, thousands of successful Negro business with lamentable exceptions, but their rarity confirms the wisdom of Washington. The struggle was a long and tedious one, but today the farmer can look upon his chosen occupation as making a contribution to this progress.

The belief in making good things better is expressed in the second paragraph of the NFA Creed, which states, I believe that the farm boy who learns to produce better crops and better livestock; who learns to improve and beautify his home surroundings, will find joy and success in meeting the challenging situations as they arise in his daily living. In other words, there is a carry-over from better livestock and better crops to better homes, schools, and citizenship.

-----Today, more than ever, we need enlightenment, training, organizations for economic advancement and self-confidence to become alert and valuable citizens. The sooner this is accomplished, the quicker we are able to discover and develop our talents; then and only then, will happiness and contentment come to all." <sup>2</sup>

Those who heard Dallas deliver this speech seem to have gathered new pride and new confidence in their work and in themselves.

The next first-place winner in the national speech contest was Paul Kennedy, of the Okmulgee Chapter, A. W. Hampton, adviser. Kennedy's speech was delivered in 1950, just three years after Willard Dallas had conquered all challengers. Paul's speech was about a subject that was very near and dear to many Oklahomans,

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<sup>2</sup>The NFA Record. Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma, December, 1947, pp. 15-16.

grass conservation. Paul selected for the title of his winning speech,

"I Am The Grass, Let Me Work."

"----I Am The Grass, Let Me Work. From the moment that the first plow sank into the virgin sod of America, we have been confronted with the problem of conserving the soil. This problem has increased with the passing of each year. We have at the present time reached the place, where unless something definite is done towards the solution of this menace, our future generations will inherit a worthless soil. Our children and their children's children will be ill fed, unhealthy, poor, unclothed and destitute, unless we as New Farmers of America can find a workable solution to this problem. Our fathers and their grandfathers have failed miserably at this task. When America was first settled the average depth of our topsoil was about nine inches today the average depth of our topsoil is between four and five inches. How much top soil will we have at the present rate of decline in the next one hundred years? What is the future of our nation that is rapidly losing its most fertile soil and whose population is increasing at a rapid rate? Surely we can all see the handwriting on the wall. In the not too distant future we will all starve to death unless the fertility of our soil is increased in proportion to our increase in population. This problem, New Farmers of America, is ours. What can we do to change the fate of our nation?

I hear a small voice crying out, as a babe in the wilderness, 'I Am The Grass, Let Me Work'. Can this voice be the solution to our problem? Can this small voice change the destiny of a nation? Can this grass, which is trodden underfoot by man and animals, which is lowliest of God's plants hold the answer to man's prayers? Let us study and analyze this statement and see if this is our heaven-sent answer.

For scores of years we have fought and tried to kill grass; we have hoed, chopped, plowed, and even today use chemicals to destroy grass. Our Creator, in His infinite wisdom, put grass here on the earth to be used. We, as men, should be intelligent enough to live with and use grass to our greatest advantage. ----Again I say, 'I Am The Grass, Let Me Work.' But give me a helping hand. Let me grow in a place of worthless weeds and brush--on land that never should be chopped. Put me back on the land that should never have seen the plow. Give me lime, fertilizer, water and care, and I will work hard for you. Let me work for you as your humble but mighty friend, 'I Am The Grass, Let Me Work'---." 3

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<sup>3</sup>The NFA Record. Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma, December, 1950, pp. 22-24.

The writer would say that the speech by Paul Kennedy was tailormade for him. He was very small and had a tiny voice. Those who heard him said that they saw him as actually representing grass.

It is very rare that a state association can have one of its members win the national speech contest for two consecutive years; however, the Oklahoma Association punctured this rarity and won the national speech contest again in 1951. Eugene McAshan of the Haskell Chapter was coached and trained by his local adviser, James Roy Johnson, who was a leader of some note in the NFA and held the following offices: local President, state President, and national First Vice-President.

McAshan selected for the title of his speech "Would Our Soils Provide for National Defense?"

"The future of our land will reflect the future of our nation. As in the remote past, so in this day, food and clothing and in a large measure shelter, have as their basis the raw material of the soil and air."

The civilized world lives from the soil. If the thin covering of fertile soil should vanish, all life would disappear from the earth within a year. The soil forms the means of contact with nature from which man is nurtured. This is why we have war-minded nations; more soil is needed for their suging population."

While we are trying to stay at peace with the rest of the world, European nations are tearing at each other's throats to see whether democracy or autocracy will be the future type of governmental authority. Yet we have a few thousand bombers "pickled" on the Arizona desert ready to be airborne in forty-eight hours. The vital machinery of hundreds of Naval ships have been similarly protected and the ships tied up in out-of-the-way waters. All of this is just in case. Today many of these ships are standing off the shores of Korea."

We as young Americans are grateful for this land of ours, 'The Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave,' but we must not forget that in the struggle for liberty and livelihood, duty demanded our forefathers to sacrifice the future for the present. He cut down the trees to make fields; he let his cattle graze the pasture lands until the ground was bare of grass, and if the livestock did not consume it all, he burned what was left. In his mad rush for quick and easy profits, he did nothing to help Mother Nature to hold

the valuable soil which was created over a period of centuries, and today we are confronted with two of the most colossal problems of all times. This does not mean that all of our soil is worthless. Should war come tomorrow, no other single country could match our rare combination of soil, climate, machinery and the intelligence of farmer skill in the art of making the most of these priceless assets.

"----America was settled by men by God on their minds. Their visions were prophetic, their passion was freedom. New Americans flocked in from the nations of the world, fleeing religious, economic, and political problems, seeking freedom and opportunity. On its rich soils they raised their generations and marked their names. Deeply in its hearts, they planted their faith.

Now we can join the poet in saying:

America! America!

Our America, Your America, My America

The Land of the free

Land of faith divine and liberty

Land of palm and pine

Always yours and mine

From the corners of the earth

our fathers came

To build the land that would be known  
to fame

Our America, Your America, My America

The land of the free

God bless America and protect her rich soils."<sup>4</sup>

McAshan's speech was given at a time when our entry into the Korean conflict was eminent. His speech hinged on patriotism and land conservation; therefore it was timely and very well received.

It is indeed a rarity when a state association wins the national speech contest three years consecutively; however, that is what the Oklahoma Association achieved when Tollie Gray of the Ada Chapter entered the national speech contest in 1952. Gray had many things in his favor, for he had had three years experience in the state speech contest, winning first in the state contest in his third year. Gray demonstrated the old adage "If at first you don't succeed try, try again."

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<sup>4</sup>The NFA Record. Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma, December, 1951, pp. 21-23.

Try he did until he won the coveted national title. He selected for his speech "When Tomorrow Comes".

"New Farmer Chapter members are frequently heard making such statements as these: (1) Our NFA Chapter purchased five hundred dollars worth of products cooperatively; (2) We had two Modern Farmers this year; (3) Our livestock judging team was first in the state; (4) We have the best public speaker in our area. All of these are noteworthy achievements, and we should be proud of them. However, it seems that too often we fail to see what lies beyond these activities and overlook the fact that we have a far more important stake involved than that of becoming contest winners. Our major interest should go far deeper than these activities. We should be primarily concerned with the changes which take place within and about us which tend toward developing socially useful citizens.

In setting up our chapter program of work, we must be concerned with other evidences of desirable educational growth besides the ability 'to do'. As chapter members, we have the responsibility also of sponsoring those types of activities which will develop desirable attitudes, worthy ideals, purposes, appreciation, and interest. These things are equally as important as the ability 'to do' although they are much more difficult to evaluate. Indiscriminate use of the ability 'to do' could easily lead to acts which are detrimental to the welfare of society. Proper attitudes and ideals are needed to direct the efforts of individuals and groups into paths which lead to the uplifting of mankind.

In times of national and international turmoil like these of today, and those which we must surely face--When Tomorrow Comes--we should reassess the outcomes of our chapter activities and eliminate those which do not contribute to the development of well-rounded rural people.

Yes, we are interested in using our New Farmers Chapters in the development of good farmers, but this goal would be secondary to and a part of that important objective--which is the growth of individuals who believe in the democratic way of life and practice in their daily activities.

When planning our chapter programs of work, we might do well to give head to the words of the Master Teacher 'For what shall it profit a man to gain the whole world and to lose his soul.'

When Tomorrow Comes, will we, the New Farmers of America, be able to adjust ourselves to the demands of the social order? Will we be able to appreciate the moral, the intellectual, and the aesthetic values so essential to a satisfying personal life?

----Finally, as we face the future, let us continue our abounding faith in the agricultural industry and home life in the open country. Be ever proud to be tillers of

of the soil and producers of livestock. Appreciate the bounties of nature and realize that man gets from life only what he can use and enjoy. Consider your work as a calling and take pride in your achievements as craftsmen and artists. But, with all the virtues of independence in thought and action, be ever mindful of your responsibility to develop your talent to the end that the lives of all people may there by be enriched so that happiness and contentment will come to all."<sup>5</sup>

The year 1955 found the Oklahoma Association represented again by the fifth and latest first-place speaker in national competition, and again it was the Ada Chapter supplying the candidate in the person of William Ware Davis. Davis chose for the title of his speech "What The NFA Organization Means To Members Of My Chapter". The Ada first-place winners had a unique way of delivering their speeches. This uniqueness added a little something extra to a speech, something that I call "human zest". The speeches did something to a person. Davis was no exception.

"A student enrolled in a high school where vocational agriculture is taught and NFA is a functioning organization is missing something if he does not avail himself of the many opportunities to be found in such an organization as the New Farmers of America.

What boy has not been thrilled by the adventures of such inspirational characters of fiction as Robin Hood or King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table?

They were engaged in a crusade. Theirs was the ever-constant pursuit of an ideal, their lives dedicated to a principle which lent direction and force to their efforts. The flying arrow, the flashing sword, and the leveling lance--these they braved because they believed.

The New Farmers of America is not unlike the colorful characters of fiction, for they, too, are engaged in a crusade; they, too, know adventure; they, too, believe. We first became aware of this fact when challenged by our instructor and when we attempted to interpret the creed of the New Farmers of America. We noted with interest that each paragraph of the creed began with the words, I believe----.

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<sup>5</sup>The NFA Record. Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma, December, 1952, pp. 18-20.



At home, our NFA Chapter is composed of six committees. These committees are: Project, Community Service, Conduct of meetings, Recreation, Activity and Scholarship. The program of each of these committees is so constructed that the development of a belief--a philosophy, if you will--is the goal to be attained.

----We believe that, although the soil is a hard taskmaster there are many joys associated with farming. We know the magic of a morning whose air is laden with country freshness and whose fingers of faint light beckon us forth to the waiting fields. Ours is the rare privilege of being able to view first hand life at its beginning, as it reveals itself in the form of a new-born colt or calf; and of watching at close range the miracle of growth, as it finds expression in a hard head of grain or a green blade of grass. We are familiar with that wonderful tiredness that sweeps over one who has done a hard days work, and too, we know that rich feeling of satisfaction that comes only to one who has an awareness that his work is well done. But most important of all, we are cognizant of the fact that we are engaged in a rare type of adventure, for through our project work we live in close association with nature's wonders, and through them know and feel an indefinable kinship with life.

----In making an over-all appraisal of the young men who make up our chapter, it is easy to reach the conclusion that they are not ordinary individuals. The New Farmers of our chapter possess that rare combination of youth and a deep sense of responsibility, being aware that tomorrow is the greatest of all responsibilities. We are engaged in a crusade. Tomorrow is calling us forward; forward to a future bursting with the challenge of hard work and the promise of a rich reward. And though we belong to the agricultural today, the agricultural future--and all that is in it--belongs to our country, to our fellow Americans and to us." 6

Most New Farmers of today will readily agree with William W. Davis when he said, "Tomorrow is calling us forward; forward to a future bursting with the challenge of hard work and the promise of a rich reward."

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<sup>6</sup>The NFA Record. Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma, December, 1955, pp. 14-16.

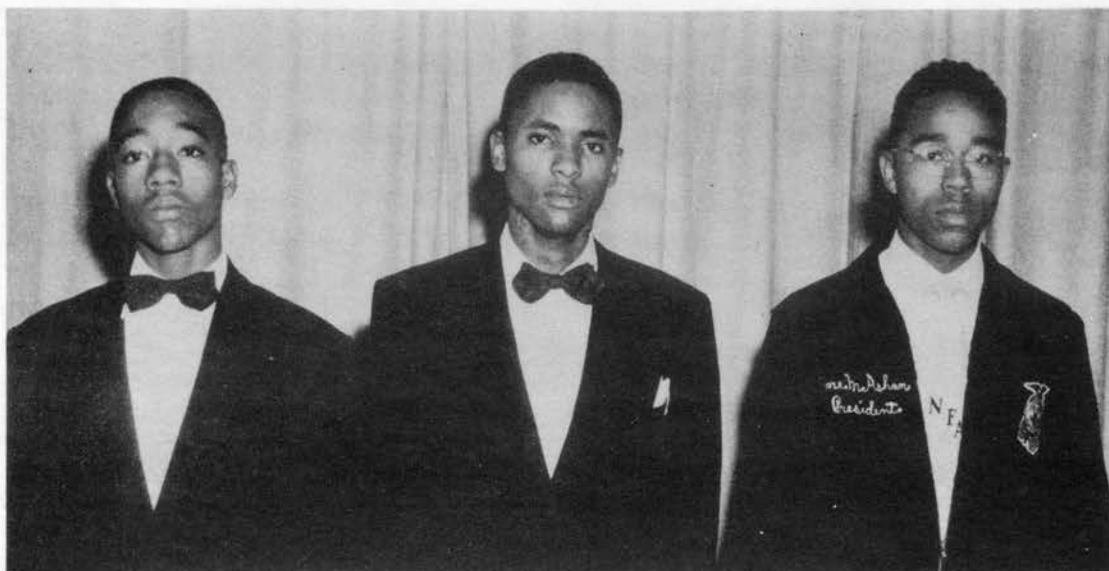


Figure 2. The national public speaking winners in 1951 are: Left to right, Leverett Lanier, Alabama, third place; George Gatlin, North Carolina, second place; Eugene McAshan, Haskell, Oklahoma first place.

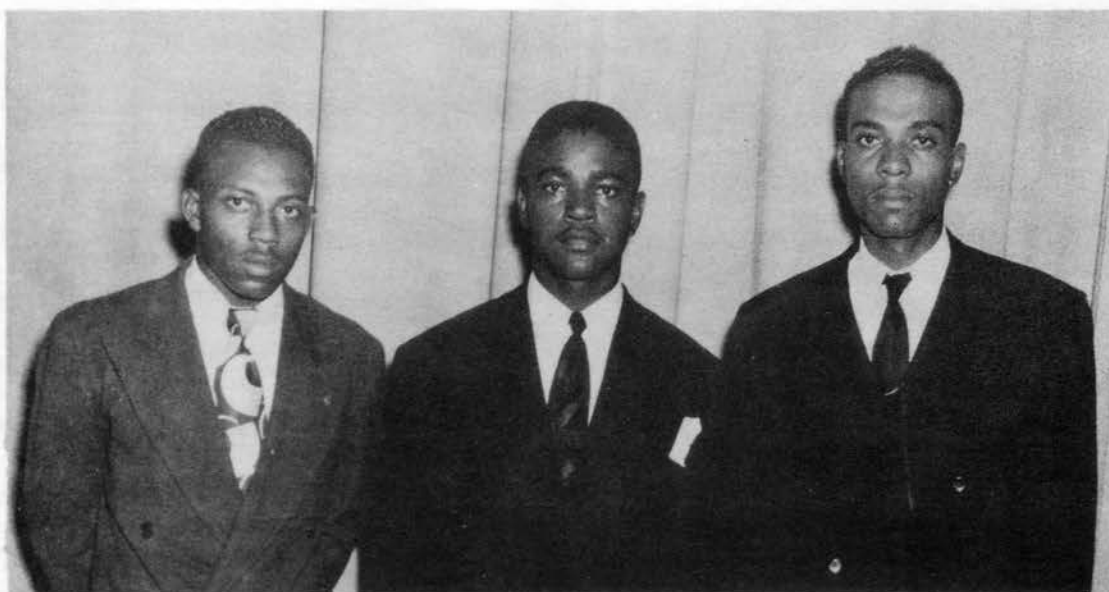


Figure 3. The national public speaking contest winners in 1947 are: Willard Dallas, the first place winner is flanked by the unidentified second and third place winners.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE SUMMER ACTIVITIES

Even though the NFO did not sponsor any type of summer activity during the first year or two, the Record shows that some chapters reported summer activities as early as 1929. The kind of recreation was picnics and tours made by the chapter.

In 1931, the state association decided to sponsor a state-wide summer camp, because of the interest in the camp by chapters from over the state. The first camp sponsored by the state association was held August 19-23, 1931. Each day of the camp was organized in order that the camp participants would be supervised at all times. Some of the activities of the camp were as follows: devotionals, games such as horse shoe pitching, racing and jumping, human burden racing, sack races, knot tying contest, signals, potato race contests, tartan derby, swimming, baseball, checkers, and croquet.<sup>1</sup>

These camps were held annually with the various chapters playing host as a site for the camp. The various chapter members looked forward to this week of roughing it out as something extra-special and with much enthusiasm.

These summer camps served as a means of getting the boys from

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<sup>1</sup>The NFA Record. Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma, July, 1931, page 8.

over the state to learn to work and play together and at the same time to accomplish something.

The state association continued to hold summer camp programs with various chapters playing host in their areas until 1941, when the state board of trustees recommended to the State Convention that the association set up a permanent camp site. The board's recommendation was adopted, and Lake Murray was selected as a permanent camp site. This action made it possible for the director of camp activities to be able to make all necessary arrangements far in advance of summer camp. Camp attendance was on a chapter voluntary basis.

Because of the war and restrictions on travel in 1942 the state association voted not to sponsor a summer camp; however, local chapters were urged to provide local summer activities for their members.

In 1943 the state association voted to cancel the summer camp for the duration of hostilities. The association encouraged its members to buy War Bonds and Stamps with the money they would use to go to summer camp. The record shows that each chapter increased its purchase of War Stamps and Bonds.

In 1946 the state convention voted to reactivate its summer camp program and voted to return to Lake Murray. Even though it is located a little off center, it had all the facilities to make for a happy summer camp for youngsters.

The attendance at summer camp continued to grow until in 1950 the state association had to hold two camps at Lake Murray, that is, divide the chapters evenly and have half of them come on one date and the other half on the following date. Much interest and enthusiasm had developed among the members.

The 1952 state association voted to adopt the summer camp committee's report, which added the following activities: boxing, cards, boating, dominoes, and moving pictures. These activities met with overwhelming approval by the delegates.

In 1953 a gift by Mrs. Maude Clifton Wayne, the deeding of eighty acres of land to the Oklahoma Association, brought about some real changes in the summer camp program. The summer camp committee recommended that the Lake Murray Camp be discontinued, that the Association accept the gift from Mrs. Wayne, that the Association develop this acreage into a summer camp site as well as to make improvements on the land, that the Association utilize the land in whatever way it was best suited, that each chapter pay \$50 to buy materials, and that each chapter come to camp prepared to work a half day in the construction of a main building on the land. This committee's report was adopted.<sup>2</sup>

The Oklahoma Association immediately set about the task of developing the farm. A huge pond was built, a well was dug, a pump was installed, and trees were cleared and building plans were drawn in the first summer. At this point it seemed that the Oklahoma Association would establish its own summer playground.

The following year saw much progress at the camp site; foundations were poured, and the laying of cement block walls were started. The NFA members were not only having fun but also learning something. Several members learned to lay blocks quite well during the camp week. Several members expressed their feeling about what they were doing in these words,

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<sup>2</sup>The NFA Record. Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma, December, 1953.

we feel that we are actually accomplishing something, making a contribution to ourselves and humanity. This program, however, was of short duration. With the consolidation of schools and the integration movement in Oklahoma, many of the NFA chapters were consolidated with FFA Chapters in their communities. The NFA was losing its identity. Because of the losing of several chapters in 1955 and several more in 1956, the Summer Camp Committee recommended that the camp site be turned back to the Board of Directors for disposal as it saw fit.

The summer activities of the Oklahoma Association since 1956 has been limited to activities sponsored by local chapters.

The summer program of the Oklahoma Association of NFA was a real need and served a real purpose during its existence.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE STATE LIVESTOCK SHOW

The Oklahoma Junior Negro Livestock show was organized in 1944. This show was an outgrowth of the desire of Negro farm boys and girls and their leaders to have the opportunity to show in a state-wide junior livestock show. The junior livestock shows sponsored then by the various junior chamber of commerce over the state would not permit Negro boys and girls to enter livestock even though several local shows and fairs were open to all 4-H and FFA and NFA youth. Today several spring shows bar Negro boys and girls.

There were several meetings of interested Negro businessmen, 4-H and NFA leaders, and the state presidents of 4-H and NFA organizations. Out of these meetings was born the Oklahoma Junior Negro Livestock Show.

A board of directors for the show was elected, and rules and regulations were set up to govern the show. It was voted to hold the first show at Langston University because it offered facilities and because the show was being sponsored solely by Negroes. Individuals permitted to enter livestock had to be either 4-H or NFA members.

The first show was held at the livestock arena on the campus of Langston University, October 10-14, 1944.<sup>1</sup> Many of the animals were

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<sup>1</sup>The N.F.A. Record. Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma, November, 1945, page 4.

either too small or too large or too fat or too thin in swine. Thus was reflected the inadequacy of Negro boys and girls in the area of feeding livestock for shows. Even though the animals were not so good as they might have been, this was a start in an area where much could be learned and experience could be gained in feeding and showing livestock. The Daily Oklahoman, of Oklahoma City, made this statement at the conclusion of the first show: "A praise worthy movement--The efforts of Negroes to sponsor a junior livestock show deserves the support of all Oklahomans who are interested in agriculture. This movement fits into the general Oklahoma livestock program in fine shape, and it deserves the most cordial encouragement."

In 1945, the show was again held on the campus of Langston University. The quality of livestock was decidedly noticeable, and it seemed that the boys and the girls of the NFA and 4-H Clubs had grasped the situation and had the situation well on the way to desirable results.

Up to this point the show had been sponsored by the various participating communities where there were located Negro county agents and vocational agriculture teachers; however, the board of directors through the conscientious efforts of Paul O. Brooks, State Director of Negro 4-H Clubs, secured the support of the Oklahoma Negro Chamber of Commerce as the underwriters of the show. Thus was kept alive the hope that the show would be totally supported financially by interested Negroes of Oklahoma.

In a later board meeting the Logan County Fair Board invited the board to hold the fall show at the Logan County Fair Grounds and offered its facilities without charge. There had been expressed a desire of the buyers of the livestock, particularly those from Oklahoma City, that



the show be held closer to Oklahoma City or in Oklahoma City. The Logan County Fair Grounds was equipped specifically to handle fairs and show. After serious deliberation the show site was changed by the board of directors. The various participating communities were so informed.

The first show that was held at the new location in 1947 was considered a huge success by many. The quality and the quantity of livestock were decidedly improved. The judges announced that the top animals in the various classes would show well in any show held anywhere. Many of the top animals that were exhibited were the top winners in local and county fairs that were held prior to the Oklahoma Junior Negro Livestock Show.

The Oklahoma Junior Negro Livestock show had as its livestock judges some of the finest livestock judging men in Oklahoma and in the world to set official placings on the animal. A few were Dean W. L. Blizzard, Oklahoma A. & M. College (Oklahoma State University), Dr. Oliver Willham, Head of Oklahoma A. & M. Animal Husbandry Department, now President of Oklahoma State University; Hoot Elijah, cattle buyer, Armour and Company, Oklahoma City; and Fred Heep, sheep buyer, Oklahoma City Stockyards.

The show continued to grow in quality and quantity each year until 1956, when the board of directors at the request of many local communities dissolved the Oklahoma Junior Negro Livestock Show. There were several reasons for this move, one of which was very significant. Most of the local community fairs were permitting Negro boys and girls to show locally, and all three of the state fairs had opened their entries to all who could qualify under the rules to enter exhibits. The board felt that there was no further real need for the show and felt that the show had served a great purpose while it lasted.

The writer, having participated in the first show as an exhibitor and as an adviser to many boys who exhibited animals in the show from 1949 to its dissolvment in 1956, feels that this shows was an exemplification of one of the things that has made this country the greatest on earth, the realization that a problem exists and though the solution arrived at is not the real solution but the best possible solution at the time. In many instances the citizens realize full well that the only real solution is found in the Christian democratic action of citizens of the community, state, or nation involved. The United States by communities has always risen to the occasion to correct an injustice which existed and the involvement here so exemplifies this principle.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE NATIONAL WINNERS IN CONTESTS

The Oklahoma Association is proud of the number of winners it has had in the various national contests. In some areas the Oklahoma Association has not done very well, and it is not very proud of its achievements in these areas.

A listing of all national winners as supplied by the U. S. Office of Education, Washington D. C., is as follows:

#### SUPERIOR FARMER DEGREE WINNERS

Year	Name	Placing	Chapter
1940	Willard Mason		Dover
1942	McClinton Neal		Idabel
1943	M. C. Burney	Star	Boley
1944	James H. Wadley	Star	Geary
1950	Herman I. Robb	Star	Hennessey
1951	James Mayo Brooks		Boynton
1953	Herman Ray		Haskell
1956	Glen W. Miles Jr.	Second	Haskell

#### H. O. SARGENT AWARD WINNERS

Year	Name	Chapter
1946	M. C. Burney	Boley
1950	Luther Shoals	Idabel

# PUBLIC SPEAKING CONTEST

Year	Name	Placing	Chapter
1935-36	Theo Tillman	Third	Sand Springs
1937-38	Morgan Mann	Third	Luther
1938-39	William Buford	Third	Sand Springs
1946-47	Willard Dallas	First	Ada
1949-50	Paul Kennedy	First	Okmulgee
1950-51	Eugene McAshan	First	Haskell
1951-52	Tollie Gray	First	Ada
1954-55	William W. Davis	First	Ada
1955-56	Donald R. Parker	Third	Luther

# QUIZ CONTEST

Year	Name	Placing	Chapter
1959-60	Henry D. Simms	First	Haskell

# LIVESTOCK JUDGING CONTEST

Year	Name	Placing	Chapter
1940	Thermal Banks Boston Banks William Thompson	Second	Wewoka
1953-54	James R. Johnson Willie L. Rivers Norvis Ryan	First	Shawnee
1954-55	George LeBlanc Lincoln Wilson Nolan Davis	Fourth	Okmulgee
1956-57	Joe G. Harrison Marcus Williams Robert Draper	Third	Haskell
1957-58	Elwood Wilson Tulus Elliot Cordell Jones	Fifth	Okmulgee
1958-59	Henry D. Simms Venture Hunter Buster Reed	Second	Haskell

# INDIVIDUAL COMPETITION LIVESTOCK JUDGING

Year	Name	Placing	Chapter
1953-54	James R. Johnson	First	Shawnee
1953-54	Norvis Ryan	Sixth	Shawnee
1954-55	Lincoln Wilson	Tenth	Okmulgee
1955-56	Walter Reed	Third	Luther
1956-57	Joe G. Harrison	Second	Haskell
1958-59	Henry D. Simms	Fourth	Haskell
1958-59	Venture Hunter	Tenth	Haskell

## QUARTET CONTEST

Year	Name	Placing	Chapter
1946-47	Wesley Brown	Third	Luther
1946-47	Clarence Williams	Third	Luther
1946-47	Quincy Simpson	Third	Luther
1946-47	Albert Corbagal	Third	Luther

## SOIL AND WATER MANAGEMENT AWARDS

Year	Name	Placing	Chapter
1953-54	Diamond Farmer, Jr.	First	Geary

These winners exemplify in many ways the great competitive spirit that has been manifested throughout the years by the Oklahoma Association of New Farmers of America.

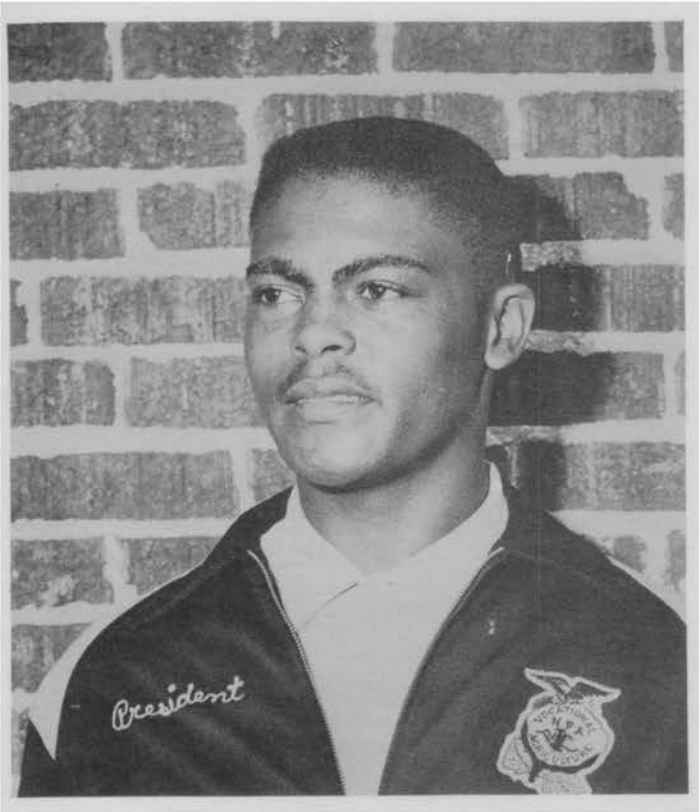


Figure 4. Henry Simms, of Haskell, Oklahoma was the first member of the Oklahoma Association to win first place in the national quiz contest. He won the honor in 1959.



Figure 5. Left to right: J. R. Johnson, Adviser; Lorenza Grant, Buster Reed, Henry Simms, and Venture Hunter. This Livestock judging team won first place in the state contest and placed second in the national contest held in Atlanta, Georgia in 1959

## CHAPTER X

### THE SUPERIOR FARMER AND H. O. SARGENT AWARD WINNERS--WHERE ARE THEY?

The Superior Farmer Degree is the highest degree that may be awarded an NFA member. This award is made to outstanding active members who reached a high degree of proficiency in farming and community leadership. The minimum requirements for election as stated in the national constitution are:

"The candidate (1) must have held each of the three prerequisite degrees prior to election to the Degree of Superior Farmer, must have been an active member of the NFA continuously for at least thirty-six months, and must have a record of satisfactory participation in the activities of the local chapter and State Association. (2) He must have satisfactorily completed at least three school years of instruction in vocational agriculture or have completed all of the vocational agriculture offered in the school last attended, must have been out of school for at least twelve months prior to the convention at which the degree is granted, and must have in operation an outstanding program of supervised farming. Productive projects must show comprehensive planning, continuation, growth, and increase in scope as substantiated by complete, accurate, and neat records. (3) During the period covered by his application he must have earned by his own efforts from farming and other agricultural work and have deposited in a bank or otherwise productively invested in farming at least \$300, provided that at least two thirds of this amount is derived from his supervised farming program. In the cases where the applicant has assisted in the support of dependents, the amount expended in the judgment of the National Board of Trustees may be considered as an investment. (4) He must show outstanding ability in leadership and cooperation by the local school superintendent or principal. (5) He must be recommended by the National Board of Trustees and receive a majority vote of the delegates present at the National NFA Convention. (6) The time limit of awarding the

Superior Farmer Degree shall be three years after the first National Convention after the candidate's graduation from or leaving high school.<sup>1</sup>

The Oklahoma State Association has had eight winners of the Superior Farmer Degree. The winners, their programs, and their present location follows.

The first winner of the Superior Farmer Degree in the Oklahoma Association was Willard Mason of Dover Chapter. He won in 1940. He enrolled in vocational agriculture when he entered the Booker T. Washington School, Dover, Oklahoma. He showed early that he had a keen interest in agriculture. His first projects were a ewe and a hundred baby chickens. With the help of his father and his vocational agriculture teacher, his projects were successful and netted a profit. He immediately made plans to increase his program. In the next year he added turkeys and a beef heifer; he borrowed the money to buy the heifer.

At the time of the application he had the following program in operation: a hundred twenty-nine chickens, one gilt, one dairy cow, fifteen turkeys, sixty acres of wheat, fourteen ewes, and three beef cattle.

In addition to his productive projects, he completed the following improvement projects: painting the home, putting on screens, repairing the barn roof, and landscaping the yard. Thus he helped to keep his home in good repair and neat.

His leadership activities consisted of being a member of the high school track and basketball teams, a member of vocational agriculture

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<sup>1</sup>The N.F.A. Guide. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington 25, D.C. 1956 ed., pp. 16-17.



judging team, and chairman of the social committee of the Oklahoma Association of NFA.

He is successfully farming in the Dover, Oklahoma, community.

The next young man of the Oklahoma Association to receive the coveted Superior Farmer Degree award was McClinton Neal, Idabel

Chapter. His farming story as told by him is as follows:

"I earned one Jersey heifer calf as payment for working for my brother in 1935. I was herding cattle for him at that time, and I also earned some cash that year doing day labor on various farms in the community.

In the early part of 1936, Prof. A. L. Scott, who is teacher of Vocational Agriculture at Slater School, the same school where I am now a senior, started a day unit class at one of the Wing schools. I was then a student in the 8th grade. He encouraged me to buy a gilt as an addition to my dairy and crop enterprise.

I raised two litters of pigs from this gilt and out of the first litter of eight pigs I sold six of them at \$41.00 per head, \$246.00 I took \$20.00 of this money and purchased a white face heifer yearling in order to secure my start in the cattle business. This gave me two heifers to start my herd. I raised two heifers that year and sold one for \$30.00. I purchased a black mare colt. She is a four year old now and will bring a colt in May.

I have earned most of my money from hogs and cattle. I sold five head of cattle as yearlings, this netted me \$155.00. I have five head on hand. They came clear of debts. I had one three year old heifer stolen and never recovered. As to hogs, I sold enough to net me \$62.00 cash, besides the meat used for home consumption. I continued to do day labor on farms to supplement the cash earned from my cattle and hogs. I was able to purchase a 40 acre farm by securing a loan through the assistance of my Vocational Agriculture teacher, Mr. Scott. Since I bought the farm I have built a four room house and converted the old house into a barn. One of my difficulties was that when I started in the farm business I was a renter and had no way of securing finance. Market prices dropped the same time. These are some of my main difficulties or problems.

My farming program for this year includes beef cattle, dairy and swine. I also plan to plant some grain, sorghum, peanuts, peas, potatoes, corn and some cotton for cash income.

I enjoyed carrying out my project and am learning how to feed them out. I enjoy studying Vocational Agriculture because I like to study about animals and plants. To sum up the story I have on hand, at present, two white face heifers which will calve in April, one white heifer seven months old, one Jersey cow which will calve in April, also one Jersey heifer calf eight months old and one black mare four years old that will bring a colt in May, 25 leg-horn hens, 40 acres of land and have built a four room house since I have bought the place. I am finishing high school this year but I don't think I will take a college course. I plan to keep on making additions to my farm so I can expand my farm program as I desire or would like to."<sup>2</sup>

The next member of the Oklahoma Association to be honored with the degree of Superior Farmer was M. C. Burney of the Boley Chapter in 1943. A summary of Burney's program shows that he conducted an average of 3.5 productive projects a year, making a total of fourteen completed productive projects. His average annual income from the projects was \$353.85, making a total income of \$1415.40. In addition to these productive projects he completed fourteen improvement projects and fourteen new supplementary farm skills.

He had \$1036.41 in assets from agricultural sources and \$971. in assets from other sources.

His cooperative activities were limited to his attending every meeting of the NFA and being a member of the livestock judging team; however, his leadership activities consisted of being a delegate to the state convention, a local vice-president and president, and state treasurer. He is presently farming in the Boley community.

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<sup>2</sup>The N.F.A. Record. Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma, May, 1942, page 14.

James H. Wadley, of the Geary Chapter, was the next member of the Oklahoma Association to be honored with the Superior Farmer Degree award. Wadley won the award in 1944. His award, however, was of a little more consequence, for he received the Star Award as a Superior Farmer, which means that he had the most outstanding program of all the members who submitted application to the national organization.

A summary of his program reveals the following: He conducted an average of three productive projects a year while enrolled in vocational agriculture and had an average income from productive projects of \$128.14, making a total of \$512.59. He completed twenty-eight improvement projects and forty-five supplementary farm skills. His assets from agricultural sources were \$338.00, and his assets from other sources were \$2090.00.

His cooperative activities consisted of being a member of the Agricultural Improvement Association and having vegetable plant production, sorghum mill, and co-op garden. His leadership activities were being a delegate to the state convention, a local reporter, a public speaker at state meeting, a member of a livestock judging team, a toastmaster at a father-son banquet, and a president of his chapter.

He presently is a bus driver with the Tulsa bus lines.

Herman Robb of the Hennessey Chapter, the next recipient of the Superior Farmer award in 1950 tells a rather unusual story of faith and determination. He was selected Star Superior Farmer. A brief summary of his program shows that he was farming as a tenant operator of a 240-acre farm. He showed a net worth of \$8,917, which includes \$5,120 invested in growing crops, \$1,860 in livestock and \$2,000 in

equipment. His leadership and cooperation activities include being a secretary and a vice-president of his local chapter and a member and a bookkeeper of cooperative purchasing groups. Here is his story:

"I was born December 22, 1929, near the town of Hennessey, Oklahoma, and reared on a farm. In my family of seven, there are two older brothers, one twin brother, two younger brothers and one sister.

My mother died when my youngest brother was quite small. I was twelve years old at the time of her death. The two older brothers were away from home so the task of caring for the three younger children fell to me. I had to do the cooking, washing, ironing, and see to it that my younger brother was off to school on time. My twin brother and I would stay home from school alternate days to care for the baby brother. By doing this, I was able to go to school part time and do some of my school work at home. My father had to work long hours, sometimes away from home, in providing a living for the family.

By the time I entered high school in the autumn of 1945, I was able to devote more time to school work. My school had an outstanding NFA chapter and Vocational Agriculture teacher. I enrolled in Agriculture, and with the assistance of my instructor, worked out a plan for a long time Supervised Practice Program. This plan included the production of beef, poultry, swine and field crops.

My greatest problem was to get started with beef cattle. The initial investment required more finance for this enterprise than the others included in my first year's program. I had very little money with which to make the original investment, but was able to secure a loan of ninety dollars from the Production Credit Association. This money was used to purchase my first calf, which was a Hereford heifer. I immediately received the Farm Hand Degree.

I worked through the summer months of 1946 in wheat harvest and with the money I earned, paid off the loan to Production Credit Association and put one-hundred twenty dollars in the bank. I also used some money to attend the NFA Summer Camp. At the beginning of the next school year, 1946-47, I made plans for expanding my Supervised Practice Program. I purchased a registered Duroc Gilt from the Marshall FFA Chapter. She was fed out and exhibited at the State Junior Livestock Show, placing second in her class. I also fed out two barrows and with my project earnings I purchased another registered Hereford heifer. During this year I received the Improved Farmer Degree.

By the beginning of my third year in high school the first heifer which I purchased brought a bull calf. I made a steer out of him and fed him out along with one other steer that I had purchased. These two animals were shown and sold at the State Junior Livestock Show held at Guthrie, Oklahoma. They averaged more than three-hundred dollars each. I was chosen as the Star Modern Farmer at the State Association of NFA, April 1947.

About this time I found it difficult to further expand my Supervised Practice Program because Dad needed most of the homestead to make a living for the family and my younger brother was becoming interested in farming. I found it necessary to leave home during my last year in high school. I rented 220 acres of land from a lady who was a widow and had three children. Approximately one-hundred sixty acres of this land was in cultivation. I live with them and help with caring for the children.

With money earned from farm work and that borrowed from the Okeene Bank, I purchased a tractor, plow, one way disk and harrow, all of which I now own. I also have a pick-up truck. I have a herd of six registered cattle and two registered Duroc sows.

In April, 1949, I received the Farm Bureau award for being the most outstanding farm youth in my community. This award presented by the Kingfisher County Farm Bureau. I am looking forward to purchasing a farm as soon as a suitable one is available.

Beginning July 1st, I shall enter a new rental arrangement. It will include one-hundred and sixty acres of crop land and one-hundred and forty acres of pasture, a total of three-hundred acres; I will also expand my beef cattle program." <sup>3</sup>

Because of the impossibility of his being able to buy land in his area, a few years later he sold his farm equipment, but kept his cattle, learned the trade of brick laying, or masonry, and is now a commercial brick layer in Ft. Worth, Texas. He has considerable real estate holdings in Ft. Worth.

James Mayo Brooks of the Boynton Chapter in 1952 won the Superior Farmer Award. A summary of his program follows. His supervised Farm Training Program in high school included three and a half acres of

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<sup>3</sup>The N.F.A. Record. Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma, December, 1950, pp. 9-10.

peanuts, four acres of cotton, and four head of beef cattle during his first year. He increased the size of his project each year. His fourth year program included eight acres of peanuts, ten acres of corn, four acres of cotton, six head of swine, and ten head of beef cattle. He started farming in 1949.

Brooks is twenty-one years old, completed four years of vocational agriculture, and was three years out of high school when the Superior Degree was awarded. He is married and has two children. He is farming a 160 acre farm as a tenant operator. His inventory shows his total assets as \$11,665. This represents his net worth. His assets include \$955 in harvested crops, \$3,220 in growing crops, \$3,740 in livestock, and \$3,050 in equipment. His labor income from farming in 1951 was \$2,237.63. He served as Parliamentarian of his local chapter and Vice-President of the Senior Class. He is now a postal employee in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

In the next year, 1953, the Oklahoma Association was fortunate to have another one of its members to be elected to the Superior Farmer Degree, in the person of Herman Ray of the Haskell Chapter. A summary of his program follows. His supervised farm training program in high school includes beef cattle, swine, corn, cotton, and soy beans. His program increased in scope each year. His labor income in the last year of high school was \$1364.93.

He is twenty-one years old and has completed his second year out of school. He is farming a 105-acre farm. He owns forty acres of land. His inventory shows his total assets as \$13,769, his liabilities as \$920, and his net worth as \$12,749. His assets include \$3,000 invested in land, \$2,294 invested in eighteen head of cattle, three sheep, and a hundred and twenty-four poultry, \$3950. invested in growing crops, and

\$4,000 invested in equipment. His labor income in 1953 was \$957. He served as member of the chapter judging team and treasurer of the junior class. He participated in two cooperative activities on the chapter level. He now owns two hundred acres of land and is farming in the Haskell Community.

The last of the Superior Farmer Degree recipients to this date is Glen W. Miles, Jr., of the Haskell Chapter, who won the award in 1956. His story follows.

When he was in the eighth grade, his father gave him an Angus cow. In the next year he, with the aid of his father and the local bank, bought five head of beef cattle. Three years later, in 1953, he owned fifteen head of beef cattle. In this same year he graduated from high school and worked out a partnership with his father in the farming business. He agreed to do all the labor on the farm and would receive half of the income from the farm crops. The livestock belonged to him.

In 1956 he conducted a farming program of twenty-four beef cattle, sixty-four acres of corn, ninety acres of cotton, ninety acres of grain sorghum, and nine acres of beans. He and his father own a hundred and sixty acres of land and rent an additional two hundred and fifty-three. They operate two tractors, and the farm implements are well housed and kept in good repair. He farms full-time and his father part-time, and their farm home is neat and well kept.

In his freshman year, 1950, he was selected to have the first gilt of the NFA Chapter's purebred Poland China pig chain. In 1953 he was cited as the young man with the most outstanding farming program in the

Haskell High School and was awarded the first purebred Angus heifer of the NFA chapter's Angus calf chain.

He has held offices in both local and state NFA organizations and has been a member of the young farmer class in Vocational Agriculture for the three years he has been out of school. In 1955 he married, and in 1956 he was awarded the Superior Farmer Degree at the national convention of the New Farmers of America in Atlanta, Georgia.

He is now farming in the Haskell community. He owns a hundred and sixty acres of land and rents two hundred and seventy-five acres. Thus he has a total of four hundred and twenty-five acres of land under his control. He owns two tractors with all the attachments and eighteen head of beef cattle.

The H. O. Sargent award is made each year to the most successful former student of vocational agriculture who has been out of public school at least three years and not more than ten years and who has completed four years of instruction in day-unit, all-day, or part-time classes.

The family of the late Dr. H. O. Sargent presented a trophy plaque to the New Farmers of America in 1939. This trophy is a beautiful plaque with individual plates for engraving the name of the most outstanding young farmer of the year.

Since 1954 the Future Farmer Foundation makes available to the winner of this award a cash award of \$500. The earlier amount was \$250.

The Oklahoma Association has had two winners of the H. O. Sargent award. Their programs and where they are follows.



M. C. Burney, Boley Chapter, 1945-56, the first winner, had the following program in operation at the time he received the award. Productive program three hundred and twenty-five acres rented land, has seventy-five acres of corn, fourteen acres of cotton, ten acres of sugar cane, twenty-five acres of small grains, twenty acres of peanuts, eight acres of potatoes, and two acres in garden, a total of one hundred and fifty-four acres in cultivation. He has forty-three head of cattle, many of his brood cows registered, one horse and two mules; he has thirty-five head of hogs and four hundred chickens. In machinery and equipment he has the following: two tractors, a trailer, two gasoline engines, twelve plows of various types, two spiked tooth harrows, three cultivators, four planters, two mowers, a lime spreader, and a hay rake.

Some completed approved practices done by him are pond building, terracing, contour farming, fertilizing, planting legumes, crop rotation, and selecting good seed.

The home farm has been improved considerably, such as making well built fences and walks, landscaping the large yard, painting and papering the house, remodeling the front porch, rescreening the windows, installing running water in the house. He is still actively engaged in farming in the Boley community.

The last young man to receive the H. O. Sargent award was Luther Shoals of the Idabel Chapter in 1949-50.

Shoals, while in the U. S. Armed Service, managed to invest much of his earnings in his and his fathers farming business. He and his father farmed as partners until his father's death.

At the time of his application he owned one hundred and fifty acres of bottom land and rented an additional forty acre pasture. His family consists of a wife, two sons, and two daughters. They live in a new six-room, neatly painted white house. He also owns a new tractor with all the attachments.

His diversified farming program includes ten acres of cotton, twelve acres of corn, four acres of alfalfa, two acres in truck crops, twenty-four beef cattle, three purebred dairy cows, and sixty laying hens. His labor income usually amounts to more than \$2,400 a year, and the net value of his farm inventory, including the real estate, is valued at \$18,333. Last year he and his family conserved for home use four hundred fifty quarts of fruit and vegetables, eight hundred pounds of cured pork, and twenty gallons of syrup. Electric lights, radio, and a well sodded lawn beautified with flowers and shrubbery help toward good family living. He is an outstanding example of successful establishment in farming. So concluded the review committee of the applications.<sup>4</sup>

He at present is actively engaged in farming in the Idabel community and has continued to improve and expand his farming operation.

These young men seem to have been heedful of the cry of a great leader, Booker T. Washington, when he said, "Let your buckets down where you are."

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<sup>4</sup>The N.F.A. Record. Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma, December 1950, pp. 10-11.



Figure 6. This plaque, along with a five hundred fifty dollar award has been won by two members of the Oklahoma Association. First won in 1946 by M.C. Burney, Boley, Oklahoma, and Luther Shoals, Idabel, Oklahoma in 1950.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE NATIONAL OFFICERS OF THE OKLAHOMA ASSOCIATION WHAT ARE THEY DOING

The Oklahoma Association is proud of its record of supplying national officers for the national organization. These national officers in a small way suggest the caliber of young men who have been trained by the Oklahoma Association.

To hold a national office seems somewhat to move the young man out of the realm of the ordinary individual. The training received as a national officer provides invaluable experience in the realm of leadership.

There is with rare exception a very definite correlation with good citizenship and leadership in early life and good citizenship and leadership in later life. The former national officers with rare exception are holding responsible positions in the respective communities.

The Oklahoma State Association has had the following national officers: two first vice-presidents, one second vice-president, one third vice-president, four treasurers, and three reporters.

Paul Counter of the Geary Chapter, the first national officer of the Oklahoma Association, was elected Treasurer in 1935-36. He was elected Modern Farmer in 1935 and to the state presidency of the NFA in 1936. He is now a successful businessman in Los Angeles, California.

Isacc Coggs, a young man who has held two national offices, (which was possible at that time) and was quite a leader in his own right at an early age. This NFA member had the distinction of holding both the office of national Treasurer, and national first Vice-President. This officer, after serving his country in the armed forces during World War Two took up residence in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. His leadership qualities did not remain dormant for long. He became very active in veterans organizations and later city council activities, and is now a state legislator in Wisconsin. Isaac Coggs, a former state treasurer of the Oklahoma Association and a resident of Muskogee, Oklahoma. In a recent interview he stated that the leadership training received by him as an FNA member was invaluable in his rise to become a legislator.

The next national officer of the Oklahoma Association was Hollis Stearns of the Boley Chapter, who was state President in 1939-40. He held the office of national reporter. He overcame a speech impediment to learn how to talk well enough to become local president and state president. He was a B+ student in college at Langston University. He joined the navy in 1941 and attended diesel engineering school. He completed this course with honors. Upon receiving his discharge from service, he re-entered Langston University and graduated with honors. He entered the University of Illinois, from which he received his M.S. Degree in soils. He returned to Langston as an associate professor in soils science. The position of area supervisor for the Farmers Home Administration in Oklahoma became open in 1955, and he was tapped to serve in that capacity. This position he holds today. He is not only a hard worker in his field of endeavors but also a community leader.

He is president of the East Side Okmulgee Chamber of Commerce.

The next N.F.A. member to come out from among the ordinary and be tapped for a national office was Timothy Armstrong of the Hugo Chapter. Armstrong was elected in 1942-43. He is a very likeable person and had an outstanding farming program at the time he was elected. His leadership ability was demonstrated in that he held the offices of state vice-president in 1943 and president in 1944. He entered service in 1945 and upon completing his tour of duty went into business in Yonkers, New York, and is a highly successful business man with considerable real estate holdings.

The next N.F.A. member to be called to serve the national organization was a smooth-talking politician who developed a fairly good farming program, having swine, poultry, corn, and cotton as part of his supervised farming program. He became a Modern Farmer in 1942. He held the office of state vice-president and president and the office of national first vice-president. He exhibited leadership ability in other areas as well; he was president of his class for four years and president of the student council. He graduated from high school as valedictorian of his class. This N.F.A. member entered Langston University in 1944 and held the office of president of his class, State Co-Chairman of the Student Christian Association, and President of the Langston University Student Council. He graduated Magna Cum laude. His present occupation is vocational agriculture teacher at Haskell, Oklahoma. He is James Roy Johnson, of the Wewoka Chapter.

Willard Dallas, local president, state president, and state, sectional, and national winner of the public speaking contest of the Ada Chapter was the next Oklahoman to be tabbed to hold a national office. He was national Treasurer in 1948-49.

After completion of high school he entered Langston University and graduated with honors. He is now a medical technician at Mercy Hospital, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Vernon Breckenridge of the Hennessey Chapter earned the degree of Modern Farmer in 1946. His program consisted of wheat, beef cattle, cotton, and headfeed. He ranked second in the Modern Farmer contest. He served as president of his local chapter, state parliamentarian, state treasurer and finally state president. He was tabbed to serve as national second vice-president in 1949-50.

After graduation from high school he enrolled at Langston University. He graduated and is now a postal employee of the Tulsa, Oklahoma, Postal Department.

Franklin Hill of the Beley Chapter was elected to the office of national treasurer. Because of his pleasing personality, he was selected as the national officer to model the N.F.A. "T" shirt with his picture appearing on the brochure advertising N.F.A. supplies. He was state president in 1951-52.

Upon completion of high school he enrolled at Langston University and graduated with honors and received a fellowship to do advanced study in agricultural chemistry, which he is now doing at Iowa State University.

The last Oklahoma Association member to date to be tabbed to serve the national Organization was Eugene O. Martin of the Boley Chapter. He was president of his local chapter, President of the State Association in 1958, and president of his student council. He was a participant in several contests, speech, quiz, quartet, and livestock judging. In all these contests he was among the top winners. He was elected to serve as national reporter. He is now a student at Langston University, majoring in agricultural economics.

These national officers of the Oklahoma Association will readily state that their training as New Farmers of America has aided greatly in their work and success, if any, in life. The self-confidence, the ability to get along with people, their courage, their willingness to serve humanity, their righteousness, if you please, were cultivated and expanded in the New Farmers of America Organization.





Figure 7. These New Farmers of America members are the National Officers for the year of 1952. Left to right; Thomas Smith, Virginia- Secretary; Columbia J. Giles, South Carolina- first Vice-President; Theobus Kelly, Florida- second Vice-President; Curtis Cooper, Georgia- President; Charles E. Bryant, Louisiana- third Vice-President; Franklin D. Hill, Boley, Oklahoma- Treasurer; Marion C. Webb, Alabama- Reporter.

## CHAPTER XII

### CONTRIBUTIONS THAT NFA HAS MADE AND IS NOW MAKING TO SOCIETY

In the preceding chapters the writer has discussed the various activities of the NFA and the individuals who have distinguished themselves in the organization and later in their various communities. It is believed that through the committees of local chapters--program of work, project, community service, conduct of meetings, recreational activity, and scholarship--a conscientious effort to carry out the purposes of the NFA and the national awards and contest program, the NFA is providing the experiences for its members to develop within themselves the broad principles for democratic leadership--character, individuality, tolerance, faith, and confidence.

The NFA has three areas of major importance: establishment in farming, leadership, and citizenship. In the foregoing chapters the writer has presented the establishment in farming of M. C. Burney, Luther Shoals, Willard Mason, McClinton Neal, Herman Ray, Glen W. Miles, Jr., and others. These young men have beyond the shadow of a reasonable doubt proved that the NFA helps young men to become established in farming. The writer realizes that just when one is established in farming is quite a question in the minds of many agricultural leaders. It, however, is thought by many that when a young farmer has

the necessary machinery, equipment, tools, livestock, and land to make a satisfactory income for himself and his family, he has an establishment in farming. The writer believes that the young men mentioned above have enough of these essential elements to qualify as established farmers.

In the second area, leadership, such former members as Isacc Coggs, Hollis Stearns, Timothy Armstrong, and Eugene McAshan, who is pastor of the First Methodist Church, Oklahoma City, who with his membership raised \$35,000 in two months in a building fund drive, Sam Fuhr of the Point Four Program, former vocational agriculture teacher and doctorate degree aspirant Oklahoma State University, and others are shining examples of young men who were inspired as NFA members to lead and serve humanity wherever they may be.

In the third area, citizenship, the Oklahoma Association is proud of its record, for many of its members volunteered to serve their country during World War Two and the Korean Crisis. There have been with rare exception no cases of un-American activities of its members. The Oklahoma Association membership and former members believe, as President Eisenhower stated, "Except that we are willing to Give all, including life to preserve democracy then we are not worthy of having it."<sup>1</sup>

This organization in many instances takes the "have nots" and provides the inspiration and leadership to cause them to become the "haves". A typical example is Leon Chaplin of the Haskell Chapter. Oklahoma's Star Modern Farmer in 1960, he enrolled in vocational agriculture in 1958 with a grade spotted Poland China gilt as his first project. He was inspired to develop a program which now consists of

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<sup>1</sup>This statement was made by President Eisenhower in an off-the-cuff talk with NFA Officers.

twelve head of dairy stock, thirty-eight head of swine, forty acres pasture, and eighty acres of crops. There are many similar cases all over the state.

During these times of increasing juvenile delinquency, clashing ideologies, radio-active fall-out, and world tension, the world needs the kind of leadership fostered by the NFA and similar organizations, the kind of leadership that still firmly believes in the Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man, the kind of leadership that places God and country above all things, the kind of citizenship that believes that God created all mankind to dwell upon the face of the earth, and finally the kind of citizenship that believes that he holds his own destiny in his hand and that only through hard work will these destinies be desirable.

These contributions the NFA has made and is now making to its society, its state, its nation, and the world.

## CHAPTER XIII

### SUMMARY

1. From the very beginning the Oklahoma Association of NFA, placed much emphasis on training for leadership. Not necessarily to lead groups or organizations but also to lead in farming programs, cooperative activities, church and school activities. Many of its members now hold responsible positions in their communities.
2. The NFA has helped many farm boys make a start and later became established in farming.
3. The NFA has helped many farm boys to find and develop their talents through such contests as speech, talent, livestock judging and quiz.
4. The NFA has provided the incentive for many members to go to college and finish to help train other boys. One-Half of the Negro vocational agriculture teachers of Oklahoma are former NFA members.
5. The NFA has aided many boys in securing a college education through its scholarship program.
6. The NFA has done much in creating the desire for ownership for many of its members and former members own land and livestock.

7. The NFA gives its members training in good citizenship through actual participation in democratic procedure in their meetings.
8. The NFA gives its members training in character building, individuality, tolerance, faith, and confidence through its committees and awards program.

The NFA has served and is now serving a very definite purpose in the state of Oklahoma for many farm boys in the development of a better agriculture and in the development of good citizens.

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